Forest Practices Board

2015–2016 ANNUAL REPORT

VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Early in the Board's existence, it defined the following values and guiding principles as the foundation to fair, honest and transparent work. After 20 years, they are still a fundamental part of how we carry out our roles and responsibilities. The Board will:

- represent the public's interests, not those of any single group;
- be accessible and non-adversarial;
- treat all people with respect, fairness, and sensitivity;
- be unbiased and non-partisan;
- try to solve problems rather than find faults;
- carry out its mandate with integrity, cost-efficiency, and accountability;
- base deliberations and decisions on knowledge, experience, and common sense;
- provide timely, clear, and concise reports to the public; and
- contribute to continuing improvements in forest and range planning and practices.

MANDATE

The Board's main roles under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* are:

- Auditing forest and range practices of government and licence holders on public lands.
- Auditing government enforcement of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.
- Investigating public complaints.
- Undertaking special investigations of forestry and range issues.
- Participating in administrative appeals.
- Providing reports on Board activities, findings and recommendations.

FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSES

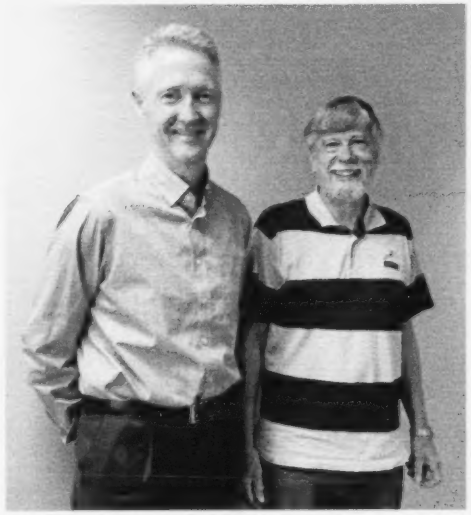
In fulfilling its mission, the Board encourages:

- sound forest and range practices that warrant public confidence;
- fair and equitable application of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*; and
- continuing improvements in forest and range practices.

20 YRS UNBIASED FOREST & RANGE PRACTICES ACT **AUDITS** ANALYZE **SUSTAINABILITY** INVESTIGATIONS **CLARITY**
APPEALS **PUBLIC REPORTS** STEWARDSHIP 20 YRS RESPECT INDEPENDENT **OBJECTIVE** FAIRNESS UNBIASED RESPECT

20 YEARS OF THE FOREST PRACTICES BOARD

In 1995, the Forest Practices Board set out on the task of creating an independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in B.C. With no precedent and few other similar models to guide it, the challenge was daunting. But over time, the Board and its programs began to take shape. In the first year, the mission, fundamental purposes and values and guiding principles were developed. In 1996, after extensive consultation with a working group representing government and the forest industry, a field-based forest practices audit program was developed and implemented—the first of its kind anywhere. Loosely based on the Ombudsman's approach, a complaint investigation program was developed. In 1999, the courts examined and upheld the Board's watchdog mandate, cementing its role in reporting to the public on the soundness of forest practices. Over time, audits of the appropriateness of government's enforcement activities were developed. Recommendations for improving forest and range practices and regulation were put forward and many were acted upon. In the early 2000s, the legislative framework governing forest and range practices in the province was completely overhauled from a prescriptive to a results-based approach, but the independent watchdog role for the Board was retained. A special projects program that looks at broader forestry topics evolved and today examines some of the most significant issues affecting forest and range management in the province. It's been a remarkable evolution that owes its success to the unwavering focus on serving the public interest by encouraging sound forest and range practices and continuous improvement in B.C. As this report looks back over 20 years of accomplishment, it also serves to highlight the actions and approaches that will carry us forward into the future.



Current Board Chair Tim Ryan (left) and first Board Chair Keith Moore (right)

20 YEARS 2015 Forest Practices Board

20 YRS UNBIASED FOREST & RANGE PRACTICES ACT AUDITS ANALYZE SUSTAINABILITY INVESTIGATIONS CLARITY APPEALS PUBLIC REPORTS STEWARDSHIP 20 YRS RESPECT INDEPENDENT OBJECTIVE FAIRNESS UNBIASED RESPECT

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE BOARD'S 20TH ANNUAL REPORT. Twenty years ago, I was the first Board Chair writing the first annual report. We started in 1995 with a dedicated group of six Board members and a vision of creating an organization that would be a vigorous advocate for good forest stewardship – a watchdog to represent the public interest. We recruited a dedicated staff, established board policies and began to respond to public complaints, conduct audits and appeal decisions. Now 20 years later, I am very proud of the Board's work. It has grown to be a respected and influential organization, raising important issues and continuing to advocate for the public interest. I look forward to the Board's continuing active role in advocating for the improved management of our rich forests in B.C., especially in addressing the economic and social needs of small rural communities and aboriginal communities.

–Keith Moore, Board Chair 1995–2001

I WAS HAPPY TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH A GROUP that continues to advocate for the stewardship of public lands in British Columbia. I was especially proud to be part of a group that still believes that the voice of the public matters.

–Andrea Lyall, Board Member 2008–2014

MY FIRST CONTACT WITH THE BOARD was shortly after its formation in 1996 through a licensee audit. I was skeptical and quite concerned with this new, independent entity judging my employer's performance – a first for both parties. We had some experience with certification audits at that point and they were not positive. After the audit I was relieved and impressed with the solid work the Board did and the fairness of its reports and findings. Once I became a Board member in 2010, I understood more clearly how diligently and carefully the Forest Practices Board operates and conducts its activities with a strong commitment to fairness and its core values. The Board has proven its worth by supporting and building the social licence of the forest sector and public confidence in B.C.'s forest practices.

–Bill Dumont, Board Member 2010–present

FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS, B.C.'S FOREST PRACTICES BOARD HAS SERVED THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, its people, economy and environment as an effective watchdog of forest practices.

Through hard work, innovation, leadership and an appropriate range of requisite skills it has gained the respect of government, industry and the public. Looking to the future, there is an opportunity at little incremental cost to extend its role to the other resource sectors.

–Mike Nash, Board Member 2008–2014

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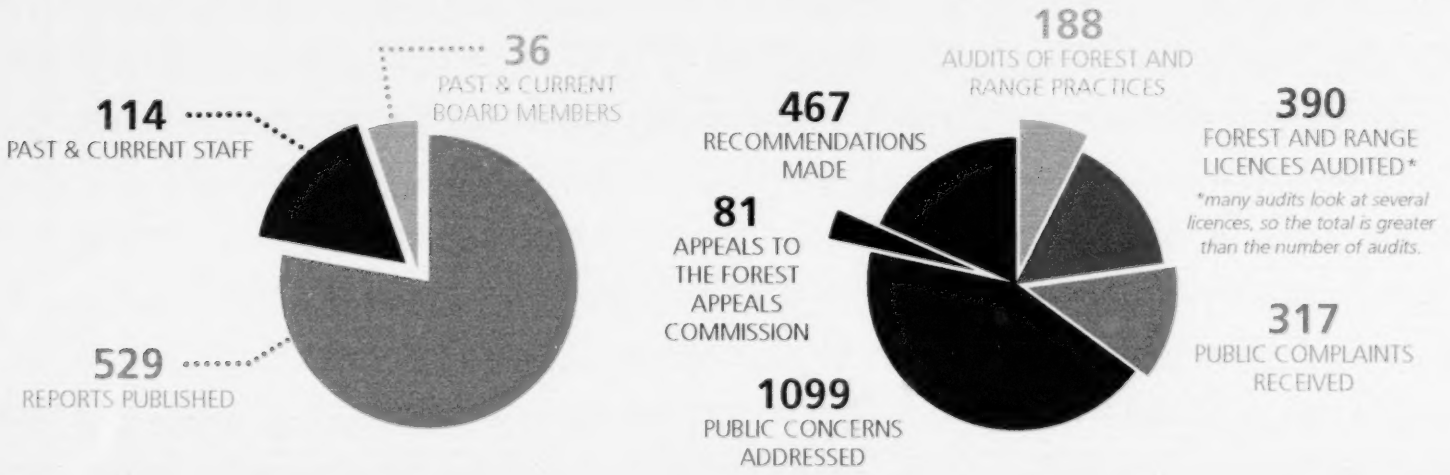
THE FOREST PRACTICES BOARD AT 20. One of the first things I noticed in becoming chair of the Forest Practices Board in 2003 is that almost every issue being audited or investigated was not an isolated forestry practice matter, but spilled over into the cumulative impacts of multiple resource activities on the same landscape and involved a host of fragmented agency jurisdictions. Observing our mandate strictly often made it sensitive to mention the full complexity of what was found.

Probably the most important observation was the high degree of integrity being practiced in audits and investigations. All reports were not only supported by direct field research but were exhaustively examined by auditees, staff, board members and published only after being finally vetted by the chair. The investigative methodology was meticulous and outside special expertise was sought by contract where it was not resident in the staff of the Board.

As a result of both of these observations, I began to advocate that the FPB be transformed into a Natural Resource Practices Board to audit and investigate the cumulative results of all resource activity on the landscapes of the province. I still believe that government in general and the British Columbia public would be well served by such an evolution.

–Dr. Bruce Fraser, Board Chair 2003–2010

20 YEARS BY THE NUMBERS



20 YRS UNBIASED FOREST & RANGE PRACTICES ACT **AUDITS** ANALYZE **SUSTAINABILITY** INVESTIGATIONS **CLARITY** APPEALS **PUBLIC REPORTS** STEWARDSHIP 20 YRS RESPECT INDEPENDENT **OBJECTIVE** FAIRNESS UNBIASED RESPECT

1994

Government establishes the Forest Practices Board under Part 8 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*.

Keith Moore is appointed the first chair of the Forest Practices Board.

The Board's first order of business is establishing the audit and investigation programs and recruiting qualified staff to fulfill the mandate.

1995

Forest Practices Board

The Board opens its doors for business, receiving 19 complaints in the first year.

FOREST PRACTICES CODE

Forest Practices Code Becomes Law - The *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and 18 regulations (including the *Forest Practices Board Regulation*) are proclaimed to take effect on June 15, 1995. Except for one opposition member, the Code is passed unanimously in the legislature.

1996

Compliance Audit Program Established. The Board develops a compliance audit reference manual, using the services of two major accounting firms – including 25 staff and contractors – to develop and test audit protocols.

First special investigation looks at logging practices near coastal streams – over 355 stream reaches and 50 km of stream on the coast are examined.

First 5 audits of forest planning and practices are carried out.

1997

The Board provides the first "report card" on the Code, concluding that forest practices have improved significantly since the Code was enacted. However, several weaknesses are identified, including the lack of provisions to protect important wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

Launch of the Board's website – all reports are now widely available to the public.

1998

Audits identify issue of old roads that are not being maintained and are causing environmental harm. No one is responsible for these roads under the Code.

A forest health issue with mountain pine beetle in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is raised as concern in an audit. A precursor to the provincial infestation to come.

Nisga'a Final Agreement creates a role for the Board to conduct annual audits, during the five-year transition period, of forest licensees working on lands being transferred to the Nisga'a people.

Complaint about construction of the Kemess Mine powerline leads to the first and only case of a significant breach of forest legislation identified by the Board.

1999

Judicial review of Northwood Audit proceeds. Northwood Inc. challenges the Board's authority to comment on unsound forest practices if they comply with legislation. The court upholds the Board's role of commenting on soundness of forest practices.

Bill Cafferata is appointed the second chair of the Forest Practices Board.

2000

First audit of the appropriateness of government enforcement of forest practices legislation is carried out.

First of 5 annual audits of forestry practices and obligations on Nisga'a lands is carried out.

The Board submits its first appeal of the approval of a forest development plan due to concerns about marbled murrelets.

2001

More complaints are received about land use planning, wildlife species protection, and government policy. There are fewer concerns with the behavior of licensees and on-the-ground operations.

The Northwood Case is upheld by the B.C. Court of Appeal – confirming the Board's role as public watchdog. Later that year the licensee's appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada is denied, ending the matter.

2002

Professional reliance is raised as a concern for the first time in two separate complaint investigations.

The Supreme Court of Canada hears a case involving damages from a large forest fire. The Board appears before the Court to argue the principles the Court should establish for determining compensation for damage to environmental values. The Court accepts much of the Board's argument.

Government introduces the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) into the legislature. It allows forest licensees more flexibility in their operations, and gives them more responsibility than the Code, but maintains the oversight role of the Board.

The Board participates in the UN FAO's XII World Forestry Congress in Quebec City.

2003

Dr. Bruce Fraser is appointed the third chair of the Forest Practices Board.

The *Forest and Range Practices Act* is proclaimed and replaces the Code. A transition period takes effect for forestry operations.

2004

A special investigation of free-to-grow is the first field-based examination of the success of reforestation on logged sites across the province, finding that most sites are achieving government's free-growing standards.

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2005

Protection of plants and animals is a common public concern, with Board investigations into topics including mountain goats, marbled murrelets, humpback whales, red-listed plant communities and rare and endangered species.

***The Wildfire Act* is proclaimed on March 31, 2005,** and includes a role for the Board in examining wildfire prevention activities.

2006

The Board examines 15 of the earliest forest stewardship plans (FSPs) prepared under FRPA, finding that the plans lack clear results, and make it difficult for the public and government to hold forest companies accountable. The Board hopes its findings will be constructive and influence the content of the many FSPs still in development.

The Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation Expands.
B.C. experiences the most widespread MPB infestation ever recorded in North America, affecting a cumulative area of about 9.2 million hectares. The Board carries out a number of projects examining the response to the outbreak and its effects on B.C. forests.

2007

The Board investigates a complaint about the management of biodiversity in the interior cedar-hemlock rainforests at Dome Creek, southeast of Prince George, B.C. The Board recommends the area for protection and in 2016, the B.C. government announces that this area will become a provincial park.

2008

Special investigation examining the sustainability of timber supply in areas with high retention harvesting on the Queen Charlotte Islands and central and northern B.C. coast, finds some issues with reforestation of these sites.

The final Board audit on Nisga'a lands concludes as government and industry complete all outstanding forestry obligations.

The Board looks at how the recommendations arising from the 2003 Kelowna wildfire that burned over 200 homes are being implemented to reduce the risks of wildland-urban interface fires. The Board reviews 50 fuel treatment projects across the province. The report includes recommendations to provincial and municipal governments, as well as those involved in fuel-reduction projects.

2009

Cumulative Effects Examined.
The proliferation of different types of resource developments and their impacts to forest resources leads the Board to do a special investigation of cumulative effects in northeastern B.C., as a case study. The Board recommends that government develop a framework for managing cumulative impacts of resource development in the province.

2010

Al Gorley
is appointed the fourth chair of the Forest Practices Board.

2011

Audits Expand to Non-Traditional Forestry Activities.
In recognition of the growing footprint of natural resource development, some non-typical forestry operations are audited, including two oil and gas companies and a ski-hill development.

The Board joins social media to engage with a wider audience.

2012

Water quality in two community watersheds is examined in an audit of forest and range practices. The Board finds that range practices need improvement to meet legislative requirements and further reduce risks to water quality.

A special investigation examines how well government is protecting old-growth forests through land use plans and how well forest licensees are implementing the requirements. The Board recommends that old-growth retention requirements apply to other resource industries in addition to forestry.

Government Enforcement Examined.
A 2010 consolidation of the province's natural resource ministries results in more for the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to inspect, but fewer inspectors. Compliance and enforcement inspections of forestry activities are found to be two-thirds less than before the consolidation.

The Board publishes a series of bulletins intended to encourage public discussion on a number of topics: management of cumulative effects of natural resource development; the value of independent oversight; professional reliance; and public involvement in forest management planning.

2013

Forest Road Bridges Examined.
A special investigation of 216 forestry bridges constructed throughout B.C. in the last 3 years finds that more than 2 dozen may not be safe for industrial use. As well, 40 percent did not have the required plans prepared and signed off by qualified engineers. Government and industry respond quickly to ensure safety and improve practices.

Report Card on *Forest and Range Practices Act*.
After 10 years of operating under FRPA, the Board concludes that forest practices generally comply with the legislation, although non-compliances have been increasing in recent years, but whether those practices are achieving government's objectives is still unknown.

2014

The Board publishes its 500th report.

FSPs Examined for Second Time.
The Board reviews a sample of FSPs from across the province to see if the content has improved since it reported on the topic in 2006. The report concludes there has been little improvement.

Wildfire Prevention Follow-up Report.
A special investigation to review what progress has been made since the initial 2010 report finds good work has been done, but not enough to reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfire in most B.C. communities.

Tim Ryan
is appointed the fifth chair of the Forest Practices Board.

2015

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The Forest Practices Board's annual report provides the public with an independent, fact-based picture of how well B.C. is doing in achieving sound forest and range practices. For over 20 years, the Board has been *'the public's independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices on public land in British Columbia.'* While many other types of resource development are high on the public's radar these days, those activities are not currently within the purview of the Board.

This annual report acknowledges the accomplishments of over 20 years of work by the Board—work that has been done by the more than 100 individuals who have been employed by the Board and the more than 30 individuals who have served as Board members overseeing the creation, development and growth of the organization into the valuable and effective organization it is today.

The Board's work has contributed to improving B.C.'s forest practices. Better forest practice performance translates into more successful operational results and improved environmental performance for industry. There is not another independent body like the Forest Practices Board and many of its responsibilities are unique in the world. We should be proud of B.C.'s commitment to sound forest and range practices and management: a standard of performance monitoring that competing jurisdictions, industries and companies do not meet.

In addition to identifying non-compliance and areas for improvement, the Board encourages better practices. In 2015, in an effort to promote better practices, the Board published a 2016 "Better Practices" calendar. In a recent audit of a major coastal forest licensee, the Board also identified two notable practices that, in the Board's opinion, should be considered for use by other forest companies.

Through the many meetings and conversations held with stakeholders throughout the past year, the Board has heard from many parties, such as ranchers, guide outfitters, trappers, hunters, backcountry tourism operators, local community residents, and first nations, that the forest values important to them are not being adequately considered and planned for. With no guarantee of involvement in the decision-making process, and no recourse for appeal if a disagreement persists, many affected stakeholders see the planning process as biased and unfair. This is an issue that will require future discussion.

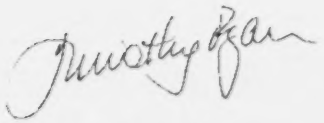
Our forest stewardship plan special investigation received significant reaction based on its conclusions that nearly all of these plans lack clarity and commitment about who will do what, where and when to achieve the government's stated objectives. Government responded positively with the minister, deputy minister and chief forester all providing direction intended to improve the next round of forest stewardship plans, currently being written. Improvements should be readily apparent by this time next year.

The follow-up report on fuel management in wildland urban interface areas attracted probably the most media attention of any Board report ever produced. The seriousness of this forest management and public safety issue cannot be overstated. It is one that will require renewed leadership, collaboration, resources and responsibility on the part of all parties.

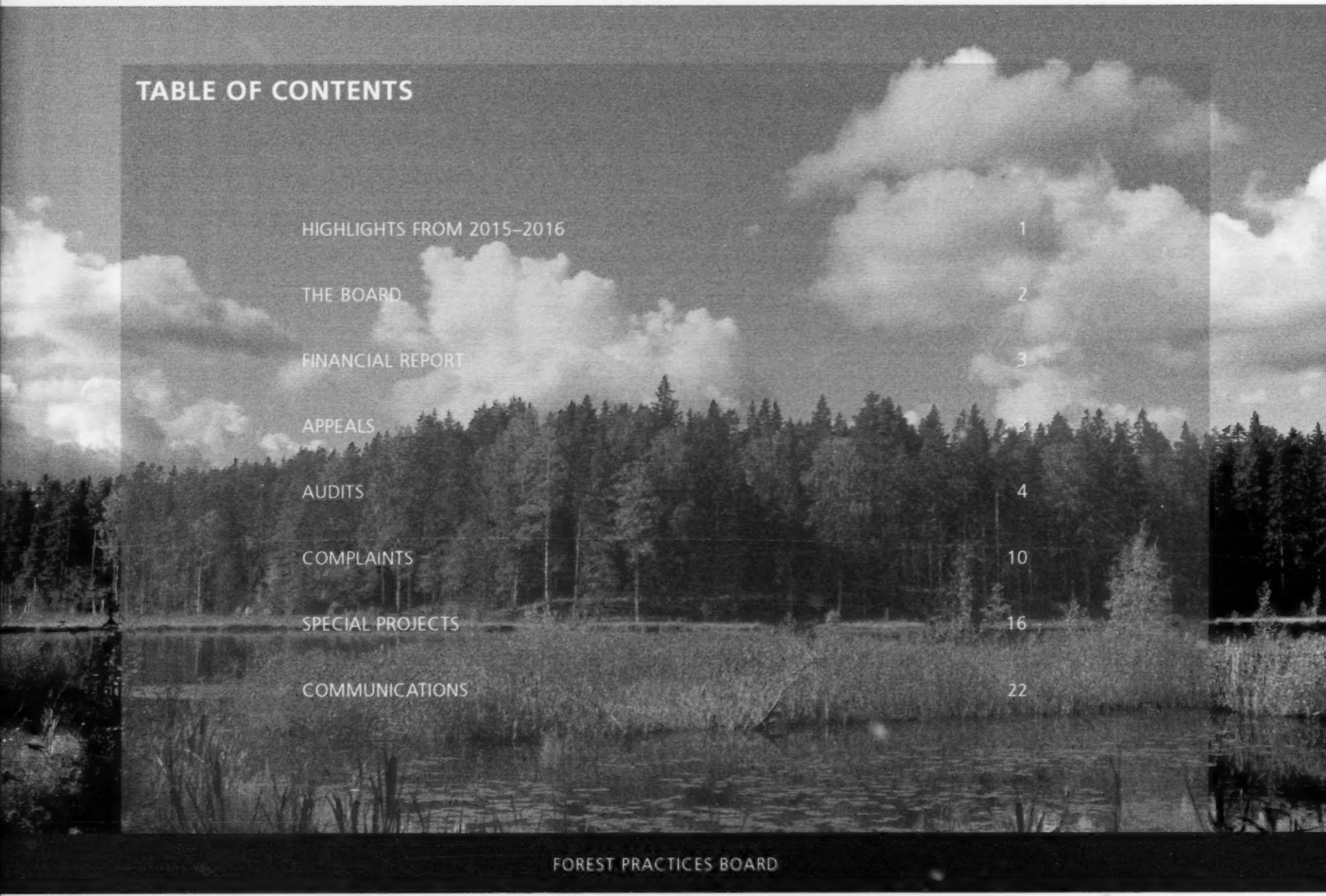
Think back 20 years to some of the major forestry issues of the day: clearcutting; wilderness preservation; biodiversity; old growth; forest practices; access to markets; public involvement; competitiveness; countervail duties; land use plans; land claims. These issues have been managed to varying degrees of success, but will always require attention and vigilance. The B.C. public expects a level of stewardship second to none when managing and operating on public forest lands. This year the Board produced a bulletin on stewardship for the purpose of fostering a discussion and promoting stewardship accountability across B.C. We are interested in your stewardship thoughts and observations.

Over the year, I was able to get to the field with Tolko foresters Mark Tamas and Murray Wilson in the north Okanagan, Canfor foresters Darrell Regimbald and Sara Hyslop in the Fort St. John area, and with rancher John Anderson and his wife Kate in the Merritt area. Each of these resource managers is very interested in doing the right thing, getting a clean audit report from the Forest Practices Board, and takes pride in what they do. John and his wife expressed a stewardship ethic for their range area. I appreciated that very much and I am looking forward to more field trips this year.

For 20 years the Board has pursued a mission of facilitating the building of public trust in forest and range practices and management through independent oversight. It is accomplished through the publication of findings and recommendations from audits, public complaint investigations, special reports, and special investigations, and by representing the public's interest at the Forest Appeals Commission. We look forward to continuing to serve that mission over the next 20 years.



Timothy S. Ryan, RPF
Chair



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015–2016

Forest Stewardship Plans

By far the most significant report published this year was the review of forest stewardship plans (FSPs). A follow-up report, this looked at FSPs to see if there has been any improvement to the plans since the Board examined the first FSPs prepared under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* in 2006.

The report found no improvements and noted that most FSPs examined contained unclear and unmeasurable commitments. Many of the plans cover vast and overlapping areas of the province, and were written using legal language that makes them very difficult for public understanding or review. It also pointed out that public review and comment on these plans is almost non-existent, in part because they are being extended every five years rather than renewed and made available for public review. The Board made a number of recommendations, most significantly that government not renew or approve any deficient FSPs. The Board also recommended that the public consultation process be improved and that professionals who prepare FSPs, and officials who approve them, be apprised of their responsibilities.

The response to this report by all stakeholders has been excellent. Board staff have been asked to speak about the findings at over a dozen meetings and events so far. The Minister and the chief forester have issued direction to district managers to guide the renewal of expiring FSPs, new FSP training sessions for government officials and forest professionals started in late March and improvements to the public consultation requirements are currently being considered.

Stewardship Bulletin

In 2014, the Board established promotion of stewardship as a strategic priority. The Board then set about defining the term stewardship within the context of the work the Board does. The result is a bulletin defining and discussing stewardship, which was published in early 2016. The bulletin sets out five principles that reflect the concept of stewardship, as the Board sees it.

1. Planning is comprehensive and based on the best available information, while acknowledging future uncertainties.
2. Planning and decision-making are transparent and responsive to input from the public.
3. Practices on the ground sustain ecological, economic and social values.
4. Management incorporates monitoring and continuous learning and is adaptive to new information.
5. Managers demonstrate accountability for outcomes.

As the Board carries out its mandate of auditing and investigating forest and range practices, it will highlight any practices seen to embody these principles in order to foster discussion and promote continuous improvement in management of B.C.'s forest and range resources on public land.

THE BOARD

TIM RYAN, RPF
Chair

DR. WILLIAM MCGILL, RPF
Vice-Chair

MARLENE MACHMER, RPBIO
Part-time Board Member

ANGELINE NYCE, RPF
Part-time Board Member

RALPH ARCHIBALD
Part-time Board Member

NORMA WILSON, P.GEO
Part-time Board Member

BILL DUMONT, RPF
Part-time Board Member

In mid-June, the Board held its annual field meeting in Northeastern B.C. It has been a number of years since the Board met in the northeast and so they traveled to Fort St. John, Dawson Creek and Chetwynd to explore current issues in the northeast and how they relate to forestry and range practices. Included in the three-day trip were visits to the location for the Site C Dam, the WAC Bennett Dam, a tour of a Canfor woods operation, West Fraser's sawmill/bioenergy plant, and reclamation work at the Quintette Coal Mine. The Board met with representatives from the Treaty 8 Tribal Council, the Saulteaux and West Moberly First Nations, the Oil and Gas Commission, Peace Valley Environmental Alliance, BC Hydro, the B.C. Cattlemen's Association, Canfor, West Fraser, B.C. Timber Sales, TECK Coal and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

In addition to this meeting, the Board met three times in Victoria and had seven meetings by conference call. Board panels also met to review and discuss individual audit and investigation files.

In November 2015, Board member Ralph Archibald and Vice-Chair Bill McGill were reappointed by Minister Thomson for two-year terms.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	Board Members & Executive	Complaint Investigations	Audits	Legal	Special Projects & Communications	Administration & Overhead	TOTAL
Salaries and Benefits	377,006	650,051	662,409	381,587	189,461	183,125	2,443,639
Other Operating Costs	101,561	89,325	346,950	2,458	34,161	770,093	1,344,548
Total Operating Expenditures	478,567	739,376	1,009,359	384,045	223,622	953,218	3,788,187
Total Capital Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Expenditures	478,567	739,376	1,009,359	384,045	223,622	953,218	3,788,187
Budget							3,818,000

NOTES:

1. "Board Members and Executive" expenditures cover those of the Chair of the Board, the part-time Board members, the office of the Executive Director, and staff providing direct support to the Board members.
2. "Legal" expenditures covers legal advice on all files of the Board, including review and appeals.
3. "Administration and Overhead" includes building occupancy charges, software licensing, centralized support charges, and salaries associated with support for corporate services and information systems.

APPEALS

34 **Determinations Reviewed**

1 **Appeal Joined**

In the period April 2015 to March 2016, the Board reviewed 34 determinations (including remediation orders) made under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*. One of these was appealed to the Forest Appeals Commission by the forest company named in the determination, and the Board joined the appeal as a third party. It involves compliance with visual quality objectives in a scenic area on the B.C. coast. A seven-day hearing was held by the Forest Appeals Commission beginning in February 2016, and the decision was reserved at the time of preparing this annual report.

AUDITS

Activities Audited in the Field

Activity	Population (total # audited)	Sampled (on the ground)
Harvesting (# of blocks)	317	207
Road Construction (KM)	644	439
Road Deactivation (KM)	123	60
Road Maintenance (KM)	6425	1978
Bridge Construction (# of bridges)	30	30
Bridge Maintenance (# of bridges)	432	183
Silviculture – Free Growing (# of blocks)	275	113
Silviculture – Regeneration Due (# of blocks)	262	68
Silviculture – Planting (# of blocks)	303	65
Silviculture – Site Preparation (# of blocks)	91	35
Fire Protection (# of active sites)	9	9

Audits by the Numbers

9 Audit Reports, with 14 separate audit opinions

- **6** with no issues (full compliance with FRPA and WA)
- **5** with no significant non compliances – but at least one area for improvement or unsound practice found
- **3** with multiple findings
- **5** with significant non-compliances
- **1** with unsound practice
- **11** with areas of improvement
- **2** with notable practices

10 New Audits

Compliance Audits Completed

	Auditee / Licence	Natural Resource District	Findings	Conclusion
1	B.C. Timber Sales (BCTS) and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Chinook Business Area	Chilliwack	BCTS's planning and activities generally complied with the requirements of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), the *Wildfire Act* (WA) and related regulations, except in one instance where BCTS did not meet the visual quality objective. Activities of the timber sale licensees generally complied with FRPA and the WA, except for one instance of bridge construction and one of culvert construction. The audit also identified unsound forest practices around streams and an area requiring improvement related to wildfire preparedness.	*Three significant non-compliances.* *One unsound forest practice.* *One area requiring improvement.*
2	B.C. Timber Sales and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Boundary Timber Supply Area/Kootenay Business Area	Kootenay-Boundary	BCTS's planning and activities complied with the requirements of FRPA, the WA and related regulations. Activities of the timber sale licensees generally complied with FRPA and the WA, except for one instance involving maintenance of natural surface drainage patterns. The audit also found that several licensees' fire hazard assessment practices require improvement.	*One significant non-compliance.* *One area requiring improvement.*
3	Teal Cedar Products Ltd. – Forest Licence A19201	Chilliwack	Planning and activities complied with the requirements of FRPA, the WA and related regulations.	*All practices were in compliance.*

	Auditee / Licence	Natural Resource District	Findings	Conclusion
4	Pacific Bioenergy Timber Corp. – Non-Replaceable Forest Licence (NRFL) A76553 and RPP Holdings Inc. – NRFL A76729	Quesnel	Planning and forestry activities on NRFL A76553 complied with the requirements of FRPA, the WA and related regulations, though fire hazard assessments were not completed – an area requiring improvement. Planning and forest activities on NRFL A76729 complied with the requirements of FRPA, the WA and related regulations.	*One area requiring improvement.* *All practices were in compliance.*
5	Lowell A. Johnson Consultants Ltd. – Forest Licence A70026	Skeena-Stikine	Planning and forest activities on FL A70026 complied with the requirements of FRPA, the WA and related regulations.	*All practices were in compliance.*
6	Audit of Oil and Gas Activities for Wildfire Act Compliance – Venturion Oil Limited, ARC Resources Ltd., Tervita	Peace	Industrial activities complied with the requirements of the WA and related regulations. However, fire hazard assessments were not completed – an area requiring improvement.	*One area requiring improvement for each licensee.*

	Auditee / Licence	Natural Resource District	Findings	Conclusion
7	B.C. Timber Sales and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Kamloops Business Area - Kamloops Field Unit	Thompson Rivers	BCTS's planning and activities fully complied with the requirements of FRPA, the WA and related regulations, and timber sale licence holders generally complied with FRPA and the WA. However, auditors identified an area requiring improvement related to the maintenance of natural surface drainage patterns.	*One area requiring improvement.*
8	Western Forest Products Inc. (WFP) – Forest Licence A19231	Campbell River	Planning and activities generally complied with the requirements of FRPA, the WA and related regulations. Auditors found two notable practices during the course of the audit, one involving WFP's bridge ledger and the other involving WFP's terrain risk management strategy. In addition, auditors identified an area requiring improvement related to road construction.	*Two notable practices.* *One area requiring improvement.*

	Auditee / Licence	Natural Resource District	Findings	Conclusion
9	Range Agreements for Grazing RAN076722, RAN076723, RAN077096, RAN076728, and RAN076729	Cascades	Planning and range activities undertaken by grazing tenures RAN076722, RAN076723, RAN077096 complied with the requirements of FRPA and related regulations. Planning and range activities undertaken by grazing tenures RAN076728 generally complied with the requirements of FRPA and related regulations, but auditors identified an area requiring improvement related to the protection of riparian areas. Planning and range activities undertaken by grazing tenure RAN076729 generally complied with the requirements of FRPA and related regulations, except auditors identified a non-compliance that caused impacts to a stream. In addition, auditors noted two areas requiring improvement related to the grazing schedule and to grazing on Crown land outside of the tenure boundary.	*All practices were in compliance (076722, 076723, 077096).* *One area requiring improvement (076728).* *One significant non-compliance (076728).* *Two areas requiring improvement (0769729).*

Audit Recommendations Made/Responses Received

AUDIT OF FOREST PLANNING AND PRACTICES – BURNS LAKE SPECIALTY WOOD LTD. – NON-REPLACEABLE FOREST LICENCE A66762

Recommendation made:
The Board requests that Burns Lake Specialty Wood Ltd. report back to the Board by January 31, 2015, on the progress made regarding the outstanding abatement obligations and the reporting of the required information for current and past abatement activities to government.

Response received:
A response was received in late March 2015 noting that Burns Lake Specialty Wood Ltd. has completed all outstanding abatement and reporting obligations.

File closed April 2015.

AUDIT OF FOREST PLANNING AND PRACTICES – 639881 BC LTD. – NON-REPLACEABLE FOREST LICENCE A72921

Recommendation made:
The Board understands the non-replaceable forest licence is under new management and requests that 639881 B.C. Ltd. report back by February 27, 2015, on progress made in meeting the outstanding *Wildfire Act* obligations, and on other actions implemented to address the issues identified in this audit.

Response received:
A response was received in May 2015 noting that 639881 B.C. Ltd. has completed all outstanding abatement and reporting obligations and the remaining licence volume has been sold to an experienced licensee.

File closed May 2014.

New Audits Started

(Not Completed at March 31, 2016)

1. Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – Community Forest Agreement K4B and Audit of Silviculture Obligations – Tree Farm Licence 42 - Tanizul Timber Ltd. – Fort St. James Natural Resource District
2. Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – Fort St. James Community Forest Corporation - Community Forest Agreement K1D – Fort St. James Natural Resource District
3. Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – Woodlot Licences W0436, W0437, W0438, W1644 – Kootenay Lake Natural Resource District

COMPLAINTS

New Complaints Received/Investigations Ongoing

Name	Issue
Dry Creek clearcut (received in March 2015 – Investigation Ongoing)	A local resident complained that a large clearcut near Grand Forks will impact wildlife and hydrology values.
Harvesting in grizzly bear habitat north of Grand Forks – July 2015	A local resident complained that BCTS is not harvesting according to the intent of a local GAR Order, which has guidance to keep road densities in a specific area below a specified level.
Road maintenance and a subsequent debris flood – December 2015	In May 2014, Dale Lake overflowed, sending a debris flood down Cooke Creek. The debris flood washed out two sections of the Cooke Creek forest service road and overtopped the Enderby-Mabel Lake road. The Board received a complaint about the maintenance of the Cooke Creek forest service road and the culverts at the outlet of Dale Lake. The complainant believes that the debris flood could have been prevented if forest district staff had acted on his warnings about road maintenance.
Harvesting in moose ungulate winter range (UWR) in the Okanagan – October 2015	A local resident complained that harvesting in an UWR for moose was contrary to the legal Order.

Complaints by the Numbers

49 **Concerns Received, Responded to and Closed***

**This does not include concerns that later became formal complaints.*

3 **New Complaints**

7 **Complaint Investigation Reports**

ADDRESSING CONCERNS FROM THE PUBLIC

Although concerns do not involve formal investigations, they can take up considerable staff time depending on the issues involved. In some cases, the Board will make numerous phone calls to government staff, licensees and the person with the concern over several days or weeks and may even conduct a field inspection to clarify the concern and see if it can be resolved or if a complaint investigation is warranted. Below are two examples of concerns addressed in 2015-16.

Visual Quality

A member of a rural community group contacted the Board with concerns about proposed harvesting and its potential to impact visual quality in a scenic area of the province. Harvesting had not yet begun, but was imminent.

Government had established a visual quality objective (VQO) for the area, which forest licensees are required to meet. The licensee had prepared a visual impact assessment (VIA) that concluded the proposed harvest design would meet the VQO. However, the community group had a consultant do another VIA on their behalf and it concluded the VQO would not be met.

Board staff suggested the group show its VIA to the licensee and see if the licensee could help them understand why there were two different conclusions. The group's representative did meet with the licensee but reported that the licensee was not co-operative. So, Board staff arranged for the group's representative to meet with the government's visual quality specialist. Following that meeting the group was sure its VIA was sound.

Board staff determined that the licensee's forest stewardship plan committed it to design the harvesting to meet the VQO. When the plan was approved by government, this became a legal obligation on the licensee. However, government compliance and enforcement staff (C&E) do not normally inspect cutblocks before they are harvested and only if the harvesting failed to meet the VQO would C&E staff look into the matter.

Board staff suggested to the complainant that they could lodge a complaint with C&E before the harvesting occurred to make C&E aware of the potential for a violation of the VQO. They did so and C&E contacted the licensee as a result. Board staff consulted with the licensee and arranged a meeting between the licensee and government's visual quality specialist. This series of events resulted in an agreement to log the least visible blocks first and to do joint field verifications to ensure the VQOs were being met as the logging proceeded.

Water

A rancher contacted the Board after finding flagging tape on planned cutblocks in a sensitive watershed with many water issues. Despite past involvement with logging in this watershed, the rancher had not been contacted by the licensee planning the logging and was unaware of what was going on. Board staff contacted the licensee, who said it was planning on logging the area after considering the results of a hydrological assessment for the watershed. The licensee said its plans were preliminary in nature and, therefore, saw no need to consult the rancher at that time.

Board staff reviewed the hydrological assessment and identified several limitations with it, including that it was based on calculations using assumptions that were not field verified. There was also no reference in the assessment to hydrological issues identified in a previous investigation the Board had done in the watershed. As a result of the Board raising these questions, the licensee agreed to defer harvesting plans until it can consider the results of a more comprehensive hydrological assessment that will be undertaken later in 2016. The licensee also committed to improving its communication with the rancher. It remains to be seen whether the rancher will file a new complaint about the proposed logging, but the Board is hopeful that the two parties will be able to work through the rancher's concerns without the need for further Board involvement.

Complaint Investigations Completed

LOGGING OLD FOREST ON TFL 47 - SONORA ISLAND

In February 2014, concerned residents complained that TimberWest was harvesting old forest, harvesting in areas with at-risk plant communities, and not abiding by the spirit and intent of the South Central Coast Order (SCCO), in its operations on Sonora Island, which is at the southern end of the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR).

The Board found that TimberWest was complying with legal requirements to conserve old forest, but the legislation was vague and not very helpful to address old-growth representation in the Southern GBR. The Board could not determine if TimberWest was complying with legal requirements for red- and blue-listed plant communities because the legal requirements were not clear and government provided little guidance on how to conserve these plant communities.

Recommendations:

1. Government should ensure that the meaning of the term "old forest" is sufficiently clear to fit with the ecological conditions present in the SCCO area and to align with the intent of ecosystem-based environment.
2. Government should ensure that the definitions for red- and blue-listed plant communities are clear for the SCCO area and that effective guidance for identification of these plant communities is available.
3. TimberWest should provide the Board with information on how it will interpret the SCCO definition of old forest when conducting forest operations within the SCCO area.

Response Received:

TimberWest provided the Board with interim criteria it is now using to identify red- and blue-listed plant communities and old forest. TimberWest also identified a number of planned cutblocks that do not meet the criteria and committed to not harvest the blocks until they do.

Government has addressed the Board's recommendations through the Great Bear Rainforest Land Use Order and supporting technical guidance documents.

File closed February 2016.

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITMENTS AND LOGGING NEAR WELLS GRAY PARK

In 1999, residents of the Upper Clearwater Valley and the local forest district agreed that the corridor of private and public land surrounding the road leading to Wells Gray Provincial Park had unique values, and they were documented in guidelines in a local resource use plan. In 2012, the residents complained to the Board that the guidelines were not being followed.

The Board found that, since the guiding principles were so broad, it is difficult to determine with any precision if they are being followed. Different interpretations are possible and that has led to the conflict.

Recommendations:

No recommendations.

FOREST HARVESTING AND STREAMFLOWS IN THE BONNEAU CREEK WATERSHED

In June 2014, a landowner near Echo Lake, east of Lumby B.C., complained to the Board that forest harvesting in the Bonneau Creek watershed was altering streamflows through his private land. The complainant said that the woodlot licensee did not consider his concerns about harvesting effects on streamflows.

The Board found that the cumulative effects of harvesting by all licensees operating in the watershed likely contributed to streamflow-related problems. However, disturbance to the riparian area by owners of the private land contributed to the problem. The woodlot licensee met FRPA's requirements to provide an opportunity for public review and comment on its woodlot licence plan. However, communication between the woodlot licensee and the complainant was not effective.

Recommendations:
No recommendations.

HARVESTING IN MOOSE UNGULATE WINTER RANGE IN THE OKANAGAN DISTRICT - CLOSING LETTER

A Resident of Lake Country filed a complaint with the Board asserting that Tolko Industries Ltd. overharvested trees in moose ungulate winter range, not meeting the requirements of an Order under the *Government Actions Regulation* for Ungulate Winter Range #U-8-006 - Okanagan TSA.

As a result of preliminary inquiries, the Board determined that Tolko had appropriately salvage harvested mountain pine beetle killed timber in the ungulate winter range, and complied with the legal order. Tolko had applied for and received an exemption from the legal order to design its own approach to manage for moose habitat. Tolko had adequately addressed the management of moose in the winter range and its process to identify, manage and recruit suitable moose habit was prepared with the advice of a registered professional biologist, and field-reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. The complainant had not previously been aware of these facts. The file was closed without further investigation.

Recommendations:
No recommendations.

WEST CRACROFT ISLAND VISUAL QUALITY

In January 2015, a guided adventure tourism company complained that proposed harvesting by TimberWest Forest Corp. would adversely affect its clients' kayaking experience. The complainant was also concerned that neither TimberWest nor the district manager of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, North Island Central Coast District, addressed its concerns about visual quality in a reasonable manner.

Findings:
The investigation focused on whether TimberWest and the district manager addressed the visual concerns in a reasonable manner. The Board found that there was little more the district manager could have done and his response to the complainant's concerns was reasonable and timely. The Board also found TimberWest's consultation and consequent changes to its plans were a reasonable response to the concerns of the complainant.

The Board encouraged both parties to continue building their business-to-business relationship and to assist government in designing appropriate visual quality objectives for the area.

Recommendations:
No recommendations.

TIMBER HARVESTING IMPACTS ON WATER FLOWS NEAR CLEARWATER

In May 2015, the owners of a mobile home park near Clearwater, complained that harvesting by the Wells Gray Community Forest increased water seepage from a cutbank beside the mobile home park, threatening several homes. As well, the park owners were concerned about loss of access to the Star Lake Road.

The Board concluded that the harvesting by the community forest contributed to the increased water flows on the hillside, but the Board could not conclude that the increased flows led to the water seepage at the mobile home park. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has since restored access to the Star Lake Road by installing a cattleguard.

The hydrologic processes in the area are complex and the risk of unusual flows and slides still exist. It is in everyone's best interests to manage future activities on the hillside using the best available information. The community forest has since taken actions that may avoid further exacerbating the current situation.

Recommendations:
No recommendations.

HARVESTING IMPACTS ON NATURAL RANGE BARRIERS NEAR SHARPE LAKE

A rancher complained that West Fraser Mills Ltd. did not mitigate impacts to a natural range barrier when it harvested mountain pine beetle-killed stands on the ranchers' Crown range tenure.

The Board found that West Fraser complied with the measures in its forest stewardship plan to mitigate breaches of natural range barriers where the complainants and West Fraser agreed a breach occurred. However, West Fraser has not taken action on an apparent breach between pastures. The full extent of actions required to mitigate this apparent breach will take time and monitoring to become obvious.

The Board also found that multiple licensees had been harvesting in this area with no coordinated planning at the landscape level to consider cumulative impacts on natural range barriers.

Recommendations:
The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations should facilitate a process between West Fraser and the complainant to confirm whether a natural range barrier has been breached and the appropriate mitigation required.

Response not due as of March 31, 2016.

ANCIENT CEDARS RAINFOREST

GIVEN PARK STATUS... NINE YEARS AFTER BOARD INVESTIGATION

In 2007, the Board investigated a complaint from several public groups about the management of biodiversity in the interior cedar-hemlock rainforest southeast of Prince George in the Rocky Mountain Trench. This inland temperate rainforest is a rare forest type and is much richer in plants than coastal temperate rainforests. The complaint was about the impacts of logging on biodiversity and on two recreational hiking trails. The Board released its report in May 2008, concluding that areas of the interior rainforest were at risk from logging. It identified weaknesses in government's "Order Establishing Biodiversity Objectives for the Prince George Timber Supply Area." The Board made six recommendations, including that government develop a stewardship strategy and designate areas to temporarily preclude timber harvesting, and that government formally designate the two recreation trails.

Government responded in 2009 that it was working on a stewardship strategy. It also established the two recreation trails, with a 57-hectare old-growth management area around the Ancient Forest Trail, and began work on legal objectives that would apply to the trails. But government did not designate areas to preclude harvesting. The Board refined its recommendation to apply to 4770 hectares identified as important sites in a guidance document on biodiversity management in the area.

Government then conducted a timber supply sensitivity analysis for proposed areas, but decided not to protect the areas, noting that forest licensees were not incorporating the ancient cedar forest sites into their forest plans so the areas were not at risk. The Board advised government that it remained convinced that legal establishment of the areas was prudent. However, as it was government's authority to decide what to do, the Board closed its file in June 2010.

Subsequent to the Board's involvement, researchers from the University of Northern B.C. continued to investigate values in the ancient cedar rainforests, and local community groups, individuals and First Nations continued to express concern about protection of the area. These efforts culminated in a recent B.C. government announcement that it plans to establish an 11 190 hectare Class A provincial park within the inland rainforest.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special Projects by the Numbers

3 Special Investigation Reports

4 Special Reports

1 Bulletin

4 New Projects in Progress

Special Investigation Reports

TIMBER REMOVAL IN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU HABITAT

Government studies over the past two decades indicate mountain caribou are at risk in the southern two-thirds of British Columbia, identifying habitat loss and alteration as key factors in caribou population declines.

As part of its Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Plan, to return mountain caribou populations to pre-1995 levels, the B.C. government issued nine ungulate winter range orders under the *Government Actions Regulation*. The orders spatially identify caribou winter ranges and contain general wildlife measures that industrial and commercial recreational licensees must follow to protect caribou habitat.

To test compliance with the orders and to address a public concern, the Board decided to assess the level of timber removal within Ungulate Winter Range U-3-004, near Blue River. The caribou population that frequents this area is declining and the government has made habitat monitoring and adaptive management high

priorities. In 2015, the Board investigated and reported on whether timber removal by forestry, hydroelectric, and adventure tourism licensees within the winter range complied with the measures and on the status of the government's habitat monitoring and adaptive management.

The Board found that all licensees complied with the measures, although one measure was hard to enforce, requiring licensees to consider the use of stand level caribou habitat retention strategies but not implement them. The Board also found it unclear whether the measures will be effective in promoting recovery of the caribou population. When the measures were established, the government was uncertain how caribou habitat should be structured to optimize recovery. It used the best available science when developing the measures, recognizing that an adaptive management framework would be required to improve them as science improved.

The government continues to work on initiatives to gauge and assess the effectiveness of the measures.

FUEL MANAGEMENT IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE – UPDATE

In May 2015, the Board reported on the progress made in managing hazardous forest fuels over the last five years. The Board found that there are many excellent examples of communities planning and proactively managing forest fuels, as well as fire crew, forest industry and ecosystem restoration work. Unfortunately, all of these programs combined are not addressing the hazard in a meaningful way.

Only about 10 percent of high risk forests around communities have received a fuel management treatment over the past decade, and this number may be inflated. Furthermore, once an area is treated, it may need additional treatment to address regrowth. Adoption of FireSmart principles is not widespread and private land is also a huge issue as there are currently no incentives for private landowners to treat hazardous fuels on their property.

The report urges the public to take personal responsibility and ask local politicians and fire departments what the risks to their community are, to support the return of prescribed fire to reduce forest fuels, and to take simple steps to FireSmart their own properties. The report also provides a number of suggestions to government to improve the situation.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLANS – ARE THEY MEETING EXPECTATIONS? – *see highlights on Page 1*

Special Reports

ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE ROADS: 2015 UPDATE

After more than a century of forestry, oil and gas and mining activities, there are over 600 000 kilometres of resource road in B.C. In 2005, the Board first reported on the state of access management in B.C. The Board identified issues that reduced government's ability to provide positive benefits and prevent negative effects of resource roads. This special report provides an update to the 2005 report.

The 2015 report found that government has made some progress in the intervening decade since the last report, however many of the issues remain with road inventory, strategic management and operational management. As well, over half the resource roads in B.C. are not being maintained. Much of that unmaintained road has been deactivated, but there is still potential for some of those roads to cause environmental damage and some continue to provide unintended access.

Recommendations made:

1. That government improve the current information on resource roads by providing a website that allows collaborative editing of content (a wiki); both to enable government staff and to engage the public in providing current information about road location and status.
2. A regulation bringing into force sections 93.1 and 93.3 of the *Land Act*, as a way to enable setting and varying of access objectives for a prescribed area that could apply to everyone; all industries and the public.
3. Government require timely notification be provided to non-industrial users of resource roads about pending changes in road status (new construction, changes in maintenance and deactivation).
4. Government implement the recommendation of the B.C. Forest Safety Ombudsman that "the Province should establish a new public highway designation for resource roads that serve as the primary or secondary access roads for communities."
5. Until comprehensive legislation is passed, government address many of the operational issues associated with access management using minor regulatory changes, by developing clear policies and by promoting and supporting the work of local road management committees.
6. Government complete an inventory of these roads, including rating the risk of negative effects. With respect to road rehabilitation in the forestry context, there is a need for a clear distinction between temporary and permanent access and clear direction that temporary access roads should be rehabilitated.

Response received:

No response received as of March 31, 2016.

SUMMARY OF 2013 AND 2014 AUDIT REPORTS

A summary of findings of the 23 audits published in 2013 and 2014, this report drew attention to the number of failures to follow *Wildfire Act* requirements. Of the 23 audit reports, 11 had no concerns noted, and 12 had a total of 24 concerns reported. Of particular concern to the Board was that one third of the findings related to the *Wildfire Act*. The Board encouraged all licensees, big and small, to pay particular attention to fire protection activities this coming season.

Unfortunately, the audits carried out in summer 2015 continued to find high levels of non-compliance with the *Wildfire Act*.

FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON WILDLIFE AND CATTLE GRAZING IN THE EAST KOOTENAY

The Rocky Mountain Trench is rich in ecological diversity. The low-elevation grassland and open forest ecosystems support the greatest biological diversity. However they also support the greatest concentration of forage use, human settlement and development. Maintaining a healthy grassland ecosystem in the Rocky Mountain Trench is important, but challenging.

In 2008, the Board published the complaint investigation report, *Wildlife and Cattle Grazing in the East Kootenay*. The report addressed concerns that: forest in-growth on grasslands had caused forage supply to decline; elk and deer numbers had been allowed to increase causing forage to be overgrazed; and individual ranchers had to reduce the number and duration of cattle grazing on Crown lands. The report recommended that the Ministry of Forests and Range and the Ministry of Environment direct reductions of forage use to achieve a positive and continuing trend in grassland ecosystem condition. Government responded in March 2011 and outlined actions they had taken to address the recommendations from the 2008 report.

This report examined the progress made by government to implement those actions. The Board found that government addressed all recommendations and have made progress with their management actions. However, issues still remain, particularly with monitoring of end results.

DISTRICT MANAGERS' AUTHORITY OVER FOREST OPERATIONS

District managers for the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations are the government decision-makers who are "closest to the ground." These are the government officials who review and approve resource development on public land.

In recent years, the Board has seen situations arise where forestry development was putting local environmental and community values at risk, yet district managers could do little to affect the development and protect the public interest.

Based on previously published Board reports, supplemented by interviews with district managers, it is the Board's view that district managers need the authority to delay issuing—or refuse to issue—a cutting permit or road permit, where necessary under specific circumstances in the public interest. The Board believes the necessary authority could possibly be granted under existing legislation, and should be seen as part of full implementation of the results-based legislative framework.

Recommendations made:

In accordance with section 131(3) of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the Board recommends that government introduce a regulation to implement *Forest Act* section 81.1. The regulation should authorize district managers to refuse a cutting permit or road permit if the minister determines that any of the following applies: there is clearly significant risk to public health or safety; there is clearly significant risk to forest resources or values; there is likely to be a contravention of legislation; or the interests of another tenure holder have not been adequately addressed (if that tenure holder requests district manager intervention).

Response received:

No response received as of March 31, 2016.

BULLETIN 17 – STEWARDSHIP – A FOREST PRACTICES BOARD PERSPECTIVE – *see highlights on Page 1*

Special Projects in Progress

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION – ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN STEEP TERRAIN

There is a vast network of resource roads constructed in British Columbia. With our rugged landscape, it is inevitable that some of these roads are constructed on steep slopes. This investigation will determine whether the parties who construct resource roads on steep terrain are meeting legislative requirements of FRPA and following professional standards of practice and the related guidelines of the professional regulatory bodies. Are the roads stable, safe for industrial and public use, constructed according to plan, and is the potential for damage to the environment being mitigated?

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION – VISUAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN ALBERNI INLET

During a visual quality training course in April 2015, Board staff identified a questionable site located on public land, visible from the main tourism destination in Port Alberni – Harbour Quay. One of the Board's internal policies is that if staff come across a potential non-compliance with forestry legislation during the course of its work or travels, they will consider whether there is a need to follow-up the issue to identify what happened and recommend the issue be addressed or improvements to practice be made in future. The Board has decided to investigate the matter further.

SPECIAL REPORT – RANGELAND HEALTH IN THE EAST KOOTENAY: IS THERE PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GRAZING BY CATTLE AND ELK?

This report will build on the 2015 follow-up report on wildlife and cattle grazing in the East Kootenay to assess whether the actions to manage levels of grazing by cattle and elk are contributing to improved rangeland condition. Also, whether restoration efforts by the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program are resulting in improved area and condition of grasslands. As an outcome of this work, the Board may make recommendations for future management and monitoring in the East Kootenay rangelands.

SPECIAL REPORT – HARVESTING YOUNG STANDS OF TIMBER ON THE B.C. COAST: DOES AGE MATTER?

The Board is aware that some stands in coastal timber supply areas are being harvested below the minimum harvest ages assumed when the allowable annual cut is determined. However, the extent of the practice or why it is occurring is not clear. Strong concerns have been expressed to the Board that this practice may threaten sustainability and stewardship.

The purpose of the project is to explore the extent of young stand harvesting in five coastal timber supply areas and comment on issues related to harvesting at young stand ages.

SPECIAL REPORT – EVALUATING GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF FISH HABITATS

The management of fish habitats in B.C. is complicated, with many habitat components at different scales and involving policy and legislation within different jurisdictions. This report will evaluate the B.C. government's approach to the management of fish habitat, with an emphasis on forestry and range practices under FRPA. It will be followed by a special investigation of forest and range licensees' on-the-ground practices to conserve fish habitats, in terms of compliance with FRPA and stewardship of the fish resource. That investigation will get underway in 2017.

SPECIAL REPORT – AN EVALUATION OF THE FOREST AND RANGE EVALUATION PROGRAM (FREP)

Started in 2014-15, this special investigation was still underway at March 31, 2016. This report will determine the effectiveness of the FREP program in implementing continuous improvement and adaptive management as a foundation for the FRPA legislative framework. The focus for the report will be the evaluation of FREP implementation (in its design context) to determine if it is meeting, or likely to meet the expected program outcomes and fulfill its role within the FRPA framework, and to provide recommendations to improve FREP design and/or delivery.

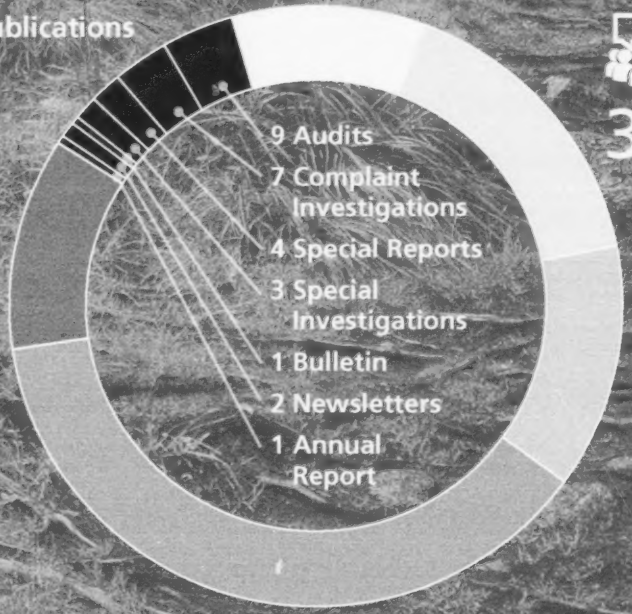
COMMUNICATIONS

24 Speaking Engagements at Conferences / Events

27 Publications

38 Conferences / Events Attended

27 News Releases Issued

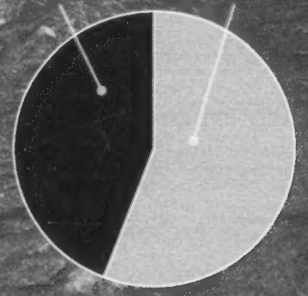


31 Media Interviews

89 Media Stories

WEBSITE VISITS

35,449



SOCIAL MEDIA

234 Facebook Likes

515 Twitter Followers

The Board's main role is to report to the public on how well B.C.'s forest and range practices are being managed and carried out – the soundness of practices in B.C. The Board communicates its findings widely. All Board reports are publicly available on the internet (www.bcfpb.ca) and directly by email to anyone who subscribes to receive them. News releases are issued to the media on the publication of most reports, generating coverage of Board findings to a wide public audience. In addition, the Board promotes its reports through social media – Facebook and Twitter.

In 2015-16, the Board published 24 reports, 2 newsletters and an annual report. These included the results of 9 audits and 7 complaint investigations, as well as 7 reports and 1 bulletin on forestry and range issues of general interest across the province. Of these reports, the one that received the most media coverage by far was the investigation of fuel management in wildland urban interface areas, with stories appearing throughout B.C. and in national media across Canada.

Fuel Management in the Wildland Urban Interface – Update	25 media stories
Access Management and Resource Roads: 2015 Update	13 media stories
Forest Stewardship Plans: Are They Meeting Expectations?	9 media stories

During 2015-16, the Board participated in 38 conferences, events and annual general meetings and gave presentations at 24 of those. Participation ranged from presentations at B.C. forestry and range sector conferences, to meetings with government and forest industry staff to discuss the findings of the Board's forest stewardship planning report. The Board also made extra efforts to meet with representatives of local governments to increase awareness and understanding of the Board among forest-based communities. These communication efforts will continue in 2016-17.

Most popular reports on the Board website

1	Forest Stewardship Plans: Are They Meeting Expectations?	1076
2	2014-15 Annual Report	627
3	District Managers' Authority Over Forest Operations	421
4	Fuel Management in the Wildland Urban Interface – Update	389
5	Conserving Old Growth Forests in B.C.	367
6	Bulletin 017 - Stewardship – A Forest Practices Board Perspective	307
7	Bridge Planning, Design and Construction	300
8	Logging Old Forest on TFL 47 - Sonora Island West Cracroft Island Visual Quality	296
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1. Access Management and Resource Roads: 2015 Update; Special Report – April 2015
2. BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders - Chilliwack Natural Resource District portion of the Chinook Business Area; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – April 2015
3. Fuel Management in the Wildland Urban Interface - Update; Special Investigation – May 2015
4. Summary of 2013 and 2014 Audit Reports; Special Report – June 2015
5. Eye on B.C.'s Forests - Newsletter - Summer 2015 – June 2015
6. Follow-up Report on Wildlife and Cattle Grazing in the East Kootenay; Special Report – July 2015
7. Logging Old Forest on TFL 47 - Sonora Island; Compliant Investigation – July 2015
8. Forest Stewardship Plans: Are They Meeting Expectations?; Special Investigation – August 2015
9. BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders - Boundary TSA and Kootenay Business Area; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – August 2015
10. Teal Cedar Products Ltd. - FL A1920; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – September 2015
11. Pacific Bioenergy Timber Corp. - NRFL A76553 and RPP Holdings Ltd. NRFL A76729; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – September 2015
12. Local Planning Commitments and Logging near Wells Gray Park; Complaint Investigation – October 2015
13. Lowell A. Johnson Consultants Ltd. - FL A70026; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – November 2015
14. District Managers' Authority Over Forest Operations; Special Report – December 2015
15. Timber Harvesting in Mountain Caribou Habitat; Special Investigation – December 2015
16. Audit of Oil and Gas Activities for Wildfire Act Compliance – January 2016
17. Closing Letter - Harvesting in Moose Ungulate Winter Range in the Okanagan District – February 2016
18. BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders - Kamloops Business Area, Kamloops Field Unit; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – February 2016
19. Western Forest Products Inc. - FL A19231; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices – February 2016
20. West Cracroft Island Visual Quality; Complaint Investigation – February 2016
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22. Harvesting Impacts on Natural Range Barriers near Sharpe Lake; Complaint Investigation – March 2016
23. Bulletin 017 - Stewardship – A Forest Practices Board Perspective – March 2016
24. Forest Harvesting and Streamflows in the Bonneau Creek Watershed; Complaint Investigation – March 2016
25. Cascades District - Range Agreements for Grazing RAN076722, RAN076723, RAN076728, RAN076729, RAN077096; Audit of Range Planning and Practices – March 2016
26. 2014-15 Annual Report

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310 - 1675 Douglas Street
PO BOX 9905 STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA B.C. CANADA
V8W 9R1

TOLL-FREE 1-800-994-5899
TEL 250-213-4700 FAX 250-213-4725
FB: BC Forest Practices Board
TWITTER: @BC_FPBoard